(b) The Government of NCT of Delhi had suggested the establishment of National Food Safety Council under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister. The proposal is under examination by the Ministry of Health.

Export of Onions

*66. MISS MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI KHAN GHUFRAN ZAHIDI:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to lift ban on the export of onion;

(b) if so, whether Government have ensured the stock of onion for domestic consumption; and

(c) what is the storage capacity and the stock available with Government?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): (a) and (b) The ban on export of onion was partially lifted on 21.1.99 by allowing export of Bangalore Rose onion and Krishnapuram onion as well as export of 3000 MTs of onion to Sri Lanka on a Government to Government basis. Subsequently, Government on 9.2.99 decided to permit the export of 25,000 MTs of onion per month for the next three months through the agencies to be designated by the Government of Maharashtra or by the Associate Shippers registered with the designated agencies. The lifting of ban on export of onion, subject to a quantitative ceiling, is to ensure that onion growers get remunerative prices for their produce and also to prevent export of large quantities, so as to keep the prices and availability at resonable levels in the country.

(c) Onion, being a perishable commodity, is not generally stored in cold storages due to its low humidity requirement and pungent smell. Only the onions of rabi crop, which are harvested in summer season, are stored in coventional mehtods by farmers. The kharif and late kharif onions contain high percentage of moisture and are not suitable for storage. The kharif and late kharif and are not suitable for storage. The kharif and late kharif onions are sold by the farmers at the earliest in the market. The Govenrment is not maintaining any stock of onions.

Extension of Rail Line at Kumarghat-Agartala Sector

*67. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the work on extension of rail line at Kumarghat-Agartala sector is proceeding as per schedule;

(b) whether sufficient budgetary provision has been made so that the work is not delayed; and

(c) whether there is a proposal to convert the metre-guage line between Lumding and Kumarghat into broad-gauge?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) Initially there were delays due to land acquisition but now the work is proceeding as per schedule.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir. The conversion of MG line from Lumbding to Badarpur is already in progress and further survey from Badarpur to Kumarghat has also been taken up.

सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली की मध्यावधि समीक्षा

*68. **श्री ईशदत्त यादव:**
चौधरी हरमोहन सिंह यादव:

क्या खाद्य और उपभोक्ता मामले मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार ने आठवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना के दौरान सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली की कोई मध्यावधि समीक्षा की थी;